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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 35th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MONGBE (Benin)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 98: INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION (continued) (A/48/219-E/1993/97 and Add.1, A/48/552, A/C.2/48/4 and 6)

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AGENDA ITEM 169: ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO STATES AFFECTED BY THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS IMPOSING SANCTIONS AGAINST THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA (SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO) (continued) (A/48/239, A/48/573-S/26705)

AGENDA ITEM 171: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF RWANDA (continued) (A/48/241)

1. Mr. VANDUNEM "MBINDA" (Angola) said that since the resumption of fighting by UNITA in October 1992, thousands had been killed or wounded and about 3 million persons had become displaced. Despite the difficult conditions, the Angolan Government had launched a far-reaching programme for economic stability intended to provide emergency relief to the sectors of the population most severely affected and to accelerate economic activity. It had also approved structural adjustment measures including devaluation of the currency in an effort to promote recovery of the key economic sectors.

2. The economic and social situation in Angola had been aggravated by drought, famine and war ravaging the central and southern regions. Continuing efforts were needed on the part of the international community to assist Angola in rehabilitating its economy. His Government took the opportunity to express its gratitude for the many forms of assistance provided by various Governments and organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system. It also paid tribute to those who had lost their lives in the course of humanitarian efforts in Angola. International assistance to Angola should begin to move from the stage of purely humanitarian assistance to encompass rehabilitation and development for long-term results, however.

(Mr. Vandunem "Mbinda", Angola)

3. He confirmed that the Government of Angola and UNITA were once again meeting face to face under United Nations auspices, and expressed the hope that peace would finally prevail.

4. Mr. OZOLINS (World Health Organization), reporting on the progress of the International Programme on the Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident (IPHECA), said that it was a cooperative effort among Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine as the affected States, WHO and a number of other countries and organizations, financed exclusively by voluntary resources. It concentrated on the highest priority health issues: leukaemia and related blood diseases, selected thyroid diseases, brain damage from prenatal exposure and management of epidemiological registers. Pilot projects were being implemented in each of those areas. Specialists had examined thousands of people, both adults and children, and WHO had assisted the effort by providing equipment and instrumentation, diagnostic kits, international expertise and training of specialists.

5. Special attention continued to be given to the incidence of thyroid cancer, particularly in Belarus. A meeting of experts held in October 1992 in Kiev had confirmed that a considerable increase had occurred in the incidence of thyroid cancer in children in Belarus and, to a lesser extent, in Ukraine; the incidence among adults had also increased. Scientists were still seeking answers to the enigma of the wide variations in the epidemiological situation of thyroid cancer from one country or region to another. A long-term epidemiological study of children exposed to radio-iodine was needed.

6. The International Programme was intended to be sustained over several decades. Its main aim was to relieve the health consequences of the accident by assisting the health authorities in affected countries and providing equipment, training, expert advice and exchange of information. Its other objective was to consolidate experience gained, thereby improving medical preparedness for the future. The limited financial support available for the pilot phase would be exhausted by mid-1994, but the need to continue the programme was obvious. Support was required to continue and expand the projects on thyroid, haematology, developmental brain disorders and standardized registration of data and information. In addition, the long-term epidemiological study of thyroid cancer incidence in the affected areas was a high priority. New activities, including the study and treatment of the persons who had taken part in the immediate aftermath of the accident, the identification and reduction of its psycho-social impact, genetic effects and dose reconstruction were also needed. The knowledge and experience gained from the aftermath of Chernobyl would benefit the entire international community. Health studies would make an essential contribution to the assessment of the total impact of the accident, allowing for the development of realistic emergency preparedness and response plans if similar events occurred in the future. They also provided a unique addition to the body of knowledge of the risks from activities involving exposure to radiation, thus improving comparisons of the risks of different forms of energy production.

7. Mr. ACHARYA (Nepal), commenting on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, said that whereas the developed countries generally suffered heavy capital losses and relatively lower loss of life, in developing countries the situation was the reverse. The suffering of the survivors, however, was the same.

8. The continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development must be part of any strategy to mitigate the consequences of natural disasters. Relief assistance did, indeed, save many lives, but relief must be followed by rehabilitation and development. Accordingly, some flexibility must be built into the country programmes of the United Nations operational agencies. An appropriate development strategy was the most important matter for consideration at the upcoming World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction.

9. The report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance (A/48/536) indicated that the United Nations system was well prepared to provide early warning, assess needs, prepare appeals and implement relief activities. The transfer of such technology and knowledge to developing countries must be increased, however. In 1993, Nepal had experienced the worst floods and landslides in its history. Thousands of people had lost their homes and livelihoods and the damage to infrastructure was enormous. It was a stark reminder that Nepal, a country prone to natural disaster, did not have even the most basic capabilities in areas such as hazard mapping and risk assessment. The World Conference must emphasize a mechanism to ensure the transfer of knowledge and technology on prevention to developing countries.

10. With the establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, coordination among United Nations agencies had improved, but much remained to be done. As the General Assembly had stressed at its forty-fourth session, special attention must be given to the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries. Their special problems must be taken into account when deciding on any action plan designed in the context of the Decade.

11. Mr. PETERS (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), said that the level and emphasis of UNHCR operations varied from one situation to another. In Croatia, for instance, UNHCR was leading the United Nations effort to bring relief to refugees and internally displaced persons. As a result of the resurgence of fighting in Angola, on the other hand, its voluntary repatriation activities had been curtailed. The prospects for voluntary return were marginally better in Afghanistan, where persons willing to repatriate despite the unsettled situation were being assisted by repatriation grant programmes located in Pakistan and Iran. Its activities in Afghanistan had focused on rehabilitation to allow local communities to absorb the internally displaced persons and the estimated 6 million refugees. On a brighter note, major repatriation movements to El Salvador had been concluded and attention was now focused on local settlement of refugees and reintegration of returnee populations.

12. In the search for solutions to the problems facing those countries, three basic points became apparent. First, the suffering in those areas demonstrated the growing discrepancy between the needs of the affected populations and the resources available to meet them. Second, the requirements of reconstruction

(Mr. Peters)

and rehabilitation demonstrated the need for improved coordination in the transition from relief to rehabilitation. Third, the problems in each of those war-ravaged countries illustrated that humanitarian action could not function in a vacuum, for it merely alleviated the symptoms; only sustained political action by the international community could affect the root causes. Humanitarian and political efforts must therefore be coordinated through mutually supportive action.

13. Coordination from the top down was not always successful, but it could work where realistic, agreed and concrete objectives were spelled out and where coordinating structures were adapted to the demands of particular situations. UNHCR had taken a number of initiatives to strengthen its coordination efforts with development, regional and other humanitarian organizations, United Nations political and peace-keeping initiatives, non-governmental organizations and concerned Governments. The International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA) process, managed by a joint UNHCR/UNDP support unit, represented a practical model of how coordination on the relief-to-development continuum could work. In May 1993, as the emphasis had shifted from repatriation and relief to reintegration and development, UNDP had assumed leadership of the programme, allowing UNHCR to scale down its activities. In the same vein, the agreement between UNHCR and the World Food Programme was a successful model that could be replicated with other agencies. It specified the modalities and parameters for delivery of food in refugee situations and the relative operational responsibilities, in order to avoid duplication and to ensure complementarity, but it was subject to periodic revision as circumstances changed. In the former Yugoslavia, where UNHCR was the lead agency, coordination had greatly enhanced the complementarity of humanitarian and political efforts.

14. Coordination worked where respective roles were clearly delineated to ensure complementarity and draw on comparative advantage. The constant priority of UNHCR was to reinforce its links with partners and search for new ones in a coordinated international humanitarian effort. In that sense, coordination and partnership were more than abstract concepts; they were a daily goal.

15. Ms. ARYSTANBEKOVA (Kazakhstan) said that, during the first years of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, severe disasters in various parts of the world had shown that natural disasters continued to pose a major threat to human life and property, and her delegation encouraged the international community to speed up the implementation of the objectives of the Decade through improved coordination and machinery.

16. Her delegation welcomed the efforts of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to promote coordination within the United Nations system with a view to ensuring a comprehensive approach to natural disaster reduction. Such coordination should continue to benefit from the experience of such United Nations bodies and agencies as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United

(Ms. Arystanbekova, Kazakhstan)

Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), especially in the provision of training and technical assistance to disaster-prone countries.

17. Kazakhstan and Central Asia as a whole was a large disaster-prone region which, unfortunately, had not been fully incorporated within the framework of the Decade. Kazakhstan was the ninth largest country in the world, and the diversity of its natural environment and broad industrial infrastructure made it vulnerable to both natural and technological disasters. Earthquakes of up to 7.9 on the Richter scale occurred in the mountainous regions, as did mudflows, avalanches, landslips and landslides, while other regions were vulnerable to spring flooding. In April and May 1993, severe floods in western Kazakhstan, had resulted in heavy death toll and sizeable material losses. Her delegation wished to express the gratitude of the Government and people of Kazakhstan to the United Nations and the Governments of Japan, Italy, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Luxembourg for their relief assistance to the victims of the flood.

18. The international community was already aware of the man-made disasters of the Aral Sea and the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing site in Kazakhstan. Her delegation called upon the countries of the world to help to avert another environmental disaster in the Caspian Sea region. The rapidly rising level of water in the Caspian Sea not only caused flooding of adjacent territory but also endangered the environmental balance of the entire region.

19. In order to deal with problems of natural and man-made disasters, Kazakhstan had established the State Commission on Emergency Situations. The Commission drew widely on international experience and promoted bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Bilateral agreements were currently being drawn up with the Russian Federation, Germany and Italy.

20. In connection with the activities and programmes of the Decade, the Government had set up the National Committee on the Decade whose main objective was to create a reliable system of natural disaster reduction and to promote cooperation in that field at the international level. Since many major cities, towns and other settlements in Kazakhstan were situated in active seismic zones, the National Committee and the State Commission of Kazakhstan were focusing on earthquake hazards. Kazakh experts believed that a comprehensive approach to the reduction of earthquake hazards should incorporate reliable earthquake forecasting, the use of modern construction technologies and materials, efficient reinforcement of old and unreliable buildings and structures, and education of the population about earthquake-reduction problems. In order to elaborate and implement such a system in Kazakhstan and Central Asia as a whole, national efforts should receive strong international support.

21. Her delegation proposed that the United Nations should establish a Centre of Seismology and Seismic Construction Technologies in Kazakhstan, with headquarters at Alma Ata, which would serve as the Centre's scientific and technical base.

22. Kazakhstan supported the interregional project on the reduction of vulnerability to natural or technological disasters in metropolitan areas, sponsored by the World Bank, UNDP and UNCHS, and invited them to choose

(Ms. Arvstanbekova, Kazakhstan)

Alma Ata, which had a population of 1.5 million and was vulnerable to natural and technological disasters, as a case for their detailed studies. Problems relating to natural and technological disaster reduction in Kazakhstan and Central Asia in general should be addressed within the framework of the Consultative Group meetings of the World Bank and UNDP. Those problems should also be dealt with by the United Nations interim office in Alma Ata.

23. Ms. CAREY (Bahamas), speaking on behalf of the 12 States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction provided the international community with a programme of action to minimize, if not eliminate, the loss of life and devastation resulting from the destructive effects of nature. The Decade should be instrumental in promoting the transfer of appropriate knowledge and technology to those communities in many developing countries that were less capable of reducing the impact of natural disasters. Technical cooperation and development programmes that emphasized technology transfer, institution-building, procurement and installation of equipment and facilities, and human resources development, would help overcome impediments to improvements in disaster reduction.

24. CARICOM commended the initiatives of the international community, including the European Development Fund (EDF), Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, to provide funding specifically for demonstration projects. It also commended the joint effort of the International Council of Scientific Unions and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in projects that would improve early warning systems for climate-related hazards. UNDP and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs had held useful workshops in 18 countries and had provided training materials to more than 100 countries. CARICOM also appreciated the UNESCO Training Materials for Disaster Reduction that had been developed for civil servants and the staff of non-governmental organizations.

25. The Pan-Caribbean Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Project, which provided inter alia for training of personnel, technical assistance, surveys of vulnerable areas and improvement of telecommunications systems in the region, had increased the region's capacity for disaster management. Following the conclusion of that project, steps had been taken to create a permanent regional mechanism to provide for an automatic, immediate and coordinated response to natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies; the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency had become operational in September 1991. One area of concentration in the Agency's work programme for 1993-1996 would involve development of disaster mitigation and prevention strategies in the Caribbean subregion.

26. The implementation of the activities of the Decade must be facilitated through extrabudgetary resources. A solution to the funding problem could be provided by financial institutions, public and private corporations, industrial enterprises, foundations and other non-governmental organizations. Every effort must be made to give top priority to the financing of the Decade. In that regard, CARICOM was looking forward to the 1994 World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, which should encourage the exchange of ideas and experiences and promote strategies for disaster preparedness, mitigation and recovery.

(Ms. Carey, Bahamas)

27. The link between natural disaster prevention and sustainable development had been recognized and incorporated into Agenda 21, and the CARICOM countries welcomed the fact that disaster mitigation programmes would be an integral part of the anticipated outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States to be held in Barbados in May 1994. That should include specific actions at the regional, national and international levels to assist disaster-prone small States in preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery.

28. The Caribbean Community supported the efforts of the United Nations to intensify special economic and disaster relief assistance, and to link special economic and disaster relief assistance with the development planning of countries affected by disasters. However, it was necessary to focus on enhancing developing countries' capability to reduce and prevent natural disasters, which would enable them to minimize the damage caused to life and property.

29. Mr. ANDEMICAEL (International Atomic Energy Agency) said that, in its efforts to mitigate the radiological consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had carried out a major project with FAO. Cattle in the areas affected by fallout from the accident were being given a compound called Prussian blue, which radically and safely reduced Caesium-137 contamination in meat and milk. That project had been based on recommendations made by the 1990 International Chernobyl Project, which had been organized by IAEA with the participation of the Commission of the European Communities, FAO, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), WHO and WMO.

30. In corroborating the evidence on the environmental contamination in the area, the International Chernobyl Project had concluded that the long-term radiation doses to people still living in contaminated area were lower than had been originally estimated and were of the same order of magnitude as doses from natural background radiation in some areas of the world. The investigation had found no radiation-related illnesses in the general population, although it had not ruled out the possibility of increased illnesses among a few high-risk groups.

31. The Project had also made several recommendations for further action by the international community. First, the Project had proposed the initiation of programmes to alleviate the psychological effects of the accident. While the importance of such programmes had been recognized by WHO and other organizations dealing with health aspects of the accident, a lack of funds had limited the contribution of international agencies. Secondly, the Project had stressed the importance of implementing programmes to address serious public health issues in the affected areas that were not related to the accident.

32. A third recommendation was that certain high-risk groups, such as children with a high-absorbed thyroid dose, should be covered by specific medical care programmes based on their potential risks. That finding had been reinforced by reports of an increase in the number of children suffering from thyroid cancer in radiation-contaminated areas of Ukraine and Belarus. In order to determine the causes of that increase, it would be necessary to examine the influence not

(Mr. Andemicael, IAEA)

only of the various inhaled iodine isotopes but also of the administered non-radioactive prophylactic iodine as well as endemic iodine-deficiency problems. A reasonable estimate of the thyroid dose received by the affected individuals and population, along with a solid epidemiological study would make it possible to estimate the number of expected cases. Such studies would be neither easy nor inexpensive, and close cooperation among all the health-related projects must be ensured.

33. The fourth recommendation was that epidemiological studies should concentrate on prospective cohort studies of selected high-risk populations. Improvements should be made in the statistical data-collection and registry systems used by local scientists. In addition, internationally accepted standards and methods should be adopted. While some progress had been made, the response to that recommendation remained limited due to insufficient resources.

34. IAEA was concerned that the actions taken to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident should be based on scientific studies and, given the shortage of resources, priorities should be set according to objective criteria. IAEA fully supported the Inter-Agency Task Force, whose work was an integral part of the broader effort to coordinate United Nations programmes of assistance to the countries in transition.

35. Mr. NOBILO (Croatia) said that one year after the adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/166 on international cooperation and assistance to alleviate the consequences of war in Croatia and to facilitate its recovery, the conflict in the former Yugoslavia continued to undermine Croatia's economic rehabilitation. Croatia was deeply grateful for the extensive humanitarian assistance contributed by the international community; however, that aid had not been directed to the reconstruction and development of the country, since the overwhelming needs of Bosnia and Herzegovina had forced the international community to reallocate its resources. As a result, the bulk of non-humanitarian assistance to Croatia had been provided through various humanitarian programmes under the coordination of UNHCR.

36. With respect to activities undertaken under the consolidated inter-agency appeal, he said it was unfortunate that so few of the projects had been oriented towards meeting the longer-term reconstruction needs of the country. In addition, many of the small-scale projects initiated under the inter-agency appeal had achieved only limited success due to the complex military situation and the lack of close coordination with Croatian authorities.

37. In regard to the humanitarian effort, he said that the distribution of resources allocated under the humanitarian portion of the inter-agency appeal should take differences in the humanitarian situations in the territories of the former Yugoslavia into account. In the case of Croatia, those differences entailed a shift in emphasis away from short-term humanitarian relief towards programmes for post-war economic recovery and rehabilitation. In that connection, he noted with regret that UNDP and the United Nations had not been adequately represented at the Conference on reconstruction and development of the Croatian economy which was held in Zagreb in May 1993. At the Conference, the Prime Minister of Croatia had pointed out that Croatia was aware of the difficulty of undertaking any major restructuring effort through international

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(Mr. Nobile, Croatia)

capital markets under current conditions; as a result, grants and other forms of international technical cooperation would remain the country's principal source of long-term assistance.

38. Croatia fully recognized the complex situation in which General Assembly resolution 47/166 had to be implemented; nevertheless, he believed that, notwithstanding the difficult conditions prevailing in his country, more might have been possible. Therefore, Croatia urged the international community to explore further possibilities for long-term support for Croatia. In that context, Croatia looked forward to the start-up of its first UNDP country programme in 1994. In conclusion, he supported the adoption of a follow-up resolution to General Assembly resolution 47/166.

39. Mr. CALOVSKI (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), said that the international community should respond positively to requests for assistance to Angola, Croatia, El Salvador, Rwanda, Liberia, Somalia, Sudan and Afghanistan and also to States affected by the implementation of economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). His delegation supported efforts to strengthen international cooperation and coordination in dealing with the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster as well as efforts to advance the preparatory work for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction to be held in May 1994.

40. His country was experiencing severe economic hardships as a result of the sanctions regime imposed by the Security Council against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Unless assistance was provided by the international community, his Government would soon be faced with an impossible situation. While the international community had expressed much sympathy for his country's problems, no tangible assistance had been forthcoming. In that context, Macedonia appreciated the personal commitment and efforts of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs to collect additional humanitarian assistance and to deliver it where necessary.

41. Given the scope of the problems facing neighbouring States as a result of the sanctions and since only a few Member States could be members of the Security Council, the latter should keep informed of all decisions relating to sanctions. Moreover, the time had come to implement Article 50 of the United Nations Charter. To do that it was necessary to ensure that those States which were likely to be most affected by decisions taken by the Council should be involved in the decision-making process.

42. Mr. KHANDOGY (Ukraine) said that while economic sanctions had proven to be a politically viable and effective policy, consequences had not been given adequate attention. Those consequences included loss of markets and interruption of relationships with long-standing trading partners, interruption of transport schedules on the Danube and additional costs to Governments of neighbouring States in connection with enforcing and monitoring of the sanctions regime. For Ukraine, the cost of compliance with the sanctions regime would reach \$4 billion by the end of 1993.

(Mr. Khandogov, Ukraine)

43. To date, the recommendations of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 724 (1991) concerning Yugoslavia had not been implemented. The States which bore special responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security, had not shown sufficient understanding of the economic problems encountered by third-party States. Moreover, whenever the latter raised the question of elaborating a mechanism for the implementation of Article 50 of the Charter, the permanent members of the Security Council had, on various pretexts, delayed consideration of the question. It might be worthwhile to consider establishing a special United Nations fund to compensate third-party States for disruptions caused by strict observance of the sanctions regime.

44. The Organization had worked out a solid package of concepts and proposals to solve the extremely complex and sensitive problem of the consequences of sanctions for third-party States. In that connection, he drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/48/573), General Assembly resolution A/47/120 and the relevant recommendations of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 724 (1991).

45. Ukraine believed that the draft resolution to be submitted on the subject adequately reflected the opportunities for resolving the question within the framework of the United Nations.

46. Mr. CATARINO (Portugal) said that the tragic economic and social situation in Angola could be changed only by bringing the conflict in that country to an end through a political settlement within the context of the Peace Accords signed in Lisbon in 1991. Once a political solution could be reached and the peace process resumed, conditions for economic reconstruction and rehabilitation in Angola would be re-established. In order to bring that moment closer, the international community must show its commitment to peace and development in Angola by continuing to provide material, technical and financial assistance. For its part, Portugal was doing everything in its power to bring about a political settlement. In addition to lending political and diplomatic support for the peace process, his country was contributing to the efforts of the international community, through its cooperative programmes, to extend humanitarian and economic assistance to Angola.

47. Mr. RAICHEV (Bulgaria) said that the application of strict economic and trade sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) by the Security Council had placed an extraordinary burden on States in the region and undermining economic development.

48. In the case of Bulgaria, the embargo had had an extremely severe impact, for it had disrupted transport along the direct routes to markets in Central and Western Europe and alternative routes which raised the cost of Bulgarian exports. Losses to Bulgaria in 1992 were estimated at approximately US\$ 943.6 million. Moreover, the sanctions had severely affected the development of the private sector, thus seriously undermining the ongoing economic reforms. The combined effect of the above factors in the midst of a generalized economic crisis posed a threat to democracy and social stability in Bulgaria. Bulgaria called once again upon the international community to show

(Mr. Raichev, Bulgaria)

its support and understanding. He believed that it was the moral, political and legal responsibility of all United Nations Member States to cooperate to ensure that the difficulties of States adversely affected by the application of trade and economic sanctions met with a sympathetic hearing and that concrete assistance was extended to them. Accordingly, Bulgaria, together with a number of other interested States, would introduce a draft resolution on the subject.

49. Mr. AL-JARRAH (United Arab Emirates), referring to agenda item 100, said that his delegation appreciated the humanitarian role of the United Nations and its specialized agencies in various parts of the world. His country had provided financial and moral assistance to Somalia since the beginning of the crisis there and called upon the parties to the dispute to return to the negotiating table with a view to restoring peace and stability and rebuilding the country's infrastructures.

50. His country had provided monetary aid and emergency assistance to Bosnia, whose Muslim population had suffered greatly at the hands of Serbia, Montenegro and the Bosnian Serbs and Croats. It was confident that the United Nations, the Security Council and the international community would deal with that question on the basis of the United Nations Charter so as to restore peace and stability.

51. The United Arab Emirates urged the international community to provide assistance for the reconstruction of Lebanon and also stressed the importance of the continued role of the United Nations and its specialized agencies in providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan.

52. Ms. JOPLING (World Food Programme) said that the World Food Programme (WFP) was responding to an increasing number of emergencies throughout the world and, in 1992, had dispensed more than 3 million tons of food assistance for refugees and displaced persons. As food was only one component of relief efforts, WFP was cooperating closely with other organizations in rehabilitation work in Afghanistan, Angola, Liberia and El Salvador and in addressing emergencies in Rwanda, Somalia and the Sudan.

53. The creation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs constituted an important milestone for the United Nations system and the Department had already played a crucial role in complex emergency relief efforts, acting as a facilitator in emergencies where peace-keeping, peacemaking and humanitarian issues were inextricably linked. Its role was to coordinate, while the agencies carried out the field operations. WFP welcomed the strong emphasis placed by the Department on the continuum from relief to rehabilitation to development and reaffirmed its commitment to support emergency prevention programmes and the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

54. Mr. MAHMOUD (Lebanon), speaking on agenda item 100, drew attention to salient points in the Secretary-General's report on assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon (A/48/453). The report noted a disappointing lack of progress in economic recovery and continuing social hardship, which necessitated humanitarian assistance for low-income and other vulnerable groups. In addition, the continued Israeli occupation was adversely affecting the reconstruction progress in southern Lebanon.

(Mr. Mahmoud, Lebanon)

55. At the request of the Lebanese Government, the Secretary-General had organized an inter-agency emergency humanitarian needs assessment mission to South Lebanon and West Bekaa, which had formulated projects amounting to a total of US\$ 29 million.

56. Those and other activities by the United Nations system in Lebanon played a vital catalytic role in capacity-building and developing human resources in different sectors of the economy. The ambitious projects planned for Lebanon, however, remained hostage to regional political circumstances, exacting a heavy toll from the people of that country. While his Government was grateful for the support provided by friendly countries of the Gulf region and the European Community, Lebanon had been suffering for 17 years and he regretted, therefore, the reluctance by donor countries to support vigorous efforts to revitalize the Lebanese economy.

57. Mr. DUBČEK (Slovakia) speaking on agenda item 169, said that, while the Slovak Republic complied fully with all the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, sanctions rarely affected the violator only. As the Secretary-General had stated in "An Agenda for Peace", States confronted with special economic problems should also have a realistic possibility of having their difficulties addressed. Having exhausted the possibilities available under Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Slovak Republic was among those States which were still severely affected by the sanctions against the former Republic of Yugoslavia.

58. Slovakia had maintained close trade links over many years with Yugoslavia and the imposition of sanctions had reduced to a sixth the total turnover between those two countries. In addition, the conversion of military production introduced in 1990 had severely impacted on the economy of Slovakia, resulting in large-scale unemployment. The Slovak economy remained too dependent on its heavy industry, which required special means of transportation such as that provided by the Danube. The sanctions regime had virtually closed that waterway, with a pronounced negative impact on all the riparian States. Delays caused by the authorization procedures were resulting in additional economic losses and had led many companies to the brink of bankruptcy.

59. In addition, a domino effect had caused whole branches of the economy to be destroyed, resulting in total losses of US\$ 246 million, directly or indirectly attributable to the sanctions regime. The situation was further aggravated by punitive tolls which the Yugoslav authorities and the authorities of the so-called Republic of Srpska Krajina illegally imposed on vessels passing through that territory. Finally, shipping companies operating on the Danube were only operating at a fraction of their capacity, with consequent losses of revenue and thousands of jobs.

60. Effective measures were urgently needed to mitigate the serious negative impact of such sanctions; otherwise the credibility of the Security Council and the United Nations itself would be undermined. His delegation therefore welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on economic assistance to States affected by the implementation of Security Council resolutions (A/48/573) and commended the establishment of the Informal Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly and fully supported the draft resolution on the issue.

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61. Mr. MIHAI (Romania), speaking on agenda item 169, said that Romania was probably the worst-affected country in the region. As a neighbouring State and major trading partner of the former Republic of Yugoslavia, Romania was now faced with mass unemployment, the closure of many companies and far-reaching social implications which the Government lacked the means to address.

62. In addition to those more visible implications, increasing difficulties were caused by the disruption of established communications routes. The traditional traffic on the Danube had almost disappeared, with serious economic and social consequences for all the riparian countries. He insisted that recent reports in the press of alleged violations by Romania of the sanctions regime were entirely unfounded and reaffirmed his Government's determination to comply with the regime. At the same time, he appealed to Member States to assist countries affected by the sanctions, since strict observance of the sanctions regime and adequate support for affected third States should go hand in hand.

63. Mrs. KECSKES (Hungary), speaking on agenda item 103, said that her delegation shared the views expressed in the Secretary-General's report on the item (A/48/534). She appealed to the international community for assistance in facilitating the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. There were over 40,000 refugees from the former Republic of Yugoslavia and Croatia in Hungary and only effective international assistance and political solutions could bring about their return.

64. Finally, she stressed the vital link between economic recovery and peaceful international relations and said that the cessation of the armed conflict in Croatia was an essential precondition for the recovery of that country.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
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FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION
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SECOND COMMITTEE
36th meeting
held on
Friday, 19 November 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. MONGBE

(Benin)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

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- (e) ENVIRONMENT (A/48/25, A/48/451 and Corr.1, A/48/272-S/26108, A/48/552; A/C.2/48/2, A/C.2/48/6)
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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 47/191 ON THE INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS TO FOLLOW UP THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (A/48/442)

- (a) ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA (A/48/226 and Add.1, A/48/564)
- (b) GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (A/48/36, A/48/564)
- (c) SUSTAINABLE USE AND CONSERVATION OF THE MARINE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE HIGH SEAS: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS (A/48/479)

1. Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said that a great deal was expected of the follow-up activity to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, much of which was to be carried out at the national level. It was even hoped that international cooperation for development would be revitalized as a result. Many countries had already prepared national sustainable development strategies and national versions of Agenda 21 or had instituted systematic follow-up arrangements. At the international level, follow-up should take the form of financing, technology transfers, capacity-building, policy development and the pursuit of the negotiating agendas identified at the Rio de Janeiro Conference.

2. His Department was responsible for helping the Commission on Sustainable Development to review and evaluate all follow-up activities and for identifying areas where further assistance was needed. The first, very successful meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development had been attended by high-level representatives of more than 50 countries and 700 non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Two working groups had been established - one on finance, the other on technology - and would begin their work in early 1994.

3. The Commission had certain expectations of Member States. First, it expected them to report on their own efforts to implement Agenda 21, which had

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(Mr. Desai)

been designed largely for implementation at the national level. Second, it expected Governments to integrate independent agents such as NGOs into the follow-up process. Third, Governments were expected to fulfil their commitments to take specific action and provide financial support and technology. Fourth, Governments were expected to ensure that the development orientation of Agenda 21 was consistently reflected in their positions in all intergovernmental bodies. Agenda 21 must be implemented not only by the Commission on Sustainable Development but also throughout the United Nations system.

4. In return, Member States had certain expectations of the Commission and his Department. They were expected to maintain the inter-agency collaboration and spirit of cooperation that had prevailed at the Earth Summit and had since been formalized in the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD). At the practical level, Task Managers had been appointed in different areas in an effort to distribute the work of coordination. As Member States also expected the Commission to provide substantive expert input into their national initiatives, the High-level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development had been established.

5. The follow-up process was advancing at the intergovernmental level as well. The Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States would take place in Barbados from 25 April to 6 May 1994. Member States must recognize that the Conference was a crucial aspect of the follow-up to the Earth Summit and respond with high-level participation, contributions to the relevant voluntary and trust funds, promotional and information activities and support for NGO participation. The follow-up process in the area of desertification was also of great importance. The International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, was the first legal instrument to evolve from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and was expected to be completed by June 1994. While the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change had not held substantive discussions in 1993, the number of countries which had ratified the Framework Convention to date was encouraging. The Government of Germany had offered to host the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and there was a strong possibility that the Conference could be held in early 1995.

6. The following four substantive questions must be addressed in connection with the Conference of Parties: how a credible review of the implementation of the Conference could be undertaken in the absence of comparable climatic conditions; how the concept of joint implementation discussed in the International Negotiating Committee could be developed in a manner consistent with the responsibilities of developing and developed countries; whether or not the Convention would have to be supplemented to reflect new scientific assessments made by the International Panel on Climate Change; and how the Conference of Parties would fulfil its policy guidance functions with respect to the financing mechanism of the Convention. It might be useful to begin the debate on those questions prior to the convening of the Conference.

7. Ms. DOWDESWELL (Under-Secretary-General, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)) said that the conclusions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, particularly Agenda 21, had marked a new beginning for UNEP. The Conference had reaffirmed the mandate of the UNEP Governing Council and the role of UNEP as the principal body within the United Nations system in the field of environment, taking into account the development aspects.

8. The seventeenth session of the UNEP Governing Council, held in May 1993, had focused almost exclusively on providing a meaningful and comprehensive response to Agenda 21 in the Programme's ongoing activities and its activities for 1994-1995. Acknowledging that its work must integrate environmental and developmental objectives, UNEP had decided to focus its efforts in three areas: the development of sound science, the encouragement of social concerns and the creation of effective public policy. The Governing Council had then noted that the proposed programme should be transitional in nature and incorporate the changes mandated by the Rio Conference. It had underscored the high priority to be accorded to activities which provided support to developing countries and had identified areas to be emphasized during 1994-1995. The Council had also supported the Earthwatch programme of environmental sensing, international environmental law, environmental economics, industry and energy.

9. The traditional catalytic role of UNEP acquired even greater importance in the light of the Programme's responsibilities under Chapter 38 of Agenda 21. In that connection, UNEP sought to develop a United Nations system-wide approach to environmental impact assessment and hoped to work with other United Nations bodies and the Bretton Woods institutions to promote the development of combined environmental and socio-economic analytical tools.

10. The Governing Council had decided to make the Earthwatch programme a more effective instrument for the environmental sensing of all elements influencing the global environment. UNEP was preparing a register of assessment-related environmental activities in the United Nations system which would feature a computerized catalogue of geographically-based environmental data. The Programme continued to contribute to the coordination and promotion of relevant scientific research with a view to providing a consolidated basis for decision-making.

11. UNEP had recognized the need to reorient many of its programmes. For example, future research in the desertification programme would focus on the social impact of desertification and on reporting successful examples of drylands protection. With other agencies, UNEP was developing a Global Climate Observing System and a global terrestrial observing system to help determine the impact of climate change on terrestrial ecosystems. The environmental information and data UNEP provided to Governments and organizations had to be adjusted to reflect the requirements of sustainable development. The Governing Council had approved a new approach to state-of-the-environment reports, which would take the form of regular scientific reports on specific sectors and topics.

12. The Governing Council had also reinforced its earlier decision to promote the transfer of environmentally sound technology through the UNEP cleaner

(Ms. Dowdeswell)

production programme. A demonstration project to improve cleaner production procedures was being designed, which included a feasibility study on international guidelines for information on potential environmental impacts to be supplied by exporters of technology. At a very practical level, the Programme would disseminate information on and explore modalities for the transfer of environmentally sound technology.

13. To promote sustainable development through international law, UNEP was encouraging the active implementation of international agreements for which it would bear responsibility. It planned to identify gaps in existing international environmental law and provide technical assistance to developing countries for the development of national environmental legislation and institutions. Education, information and training would remain a cornerstone of that UNEP programme.

14. Protection of freshwater resources had received the widest support during the deliberations of the Governing Council. The Programme's comprehensive approach to assessing and managing water resources would be strengthened by the Secretary-General's acceptance of the recommendation to designate UNEP as the focal point for water by merging all Secretariat freshwater activities under UNEP.

15. In response to Agenda 21, UNEP was contemplating strengthening the prior informed consent procedure contained in the amended London Guidelines for the Exchange of Information on Chemicals in International Trade. Combining its keen interest in capacity-building and its experience in environmental law, UNEP had launched a major four-year project to strengthen national environmental legislation and institutional capacity in Africa. The project also involved the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and the Government of the Netherlands. UNEP continued to encourage the implementation of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The Programme had also branched out into new areas such as poverty alleviation and trade and environment.

16. She was pleased to note that desertification had again become a major international concern, and she hoped that negotiations on an international convention to deal with that scourge, begun in Nairobi earlier in the year, would culminate in an international legal framework whose implementation modalities would be clearly defined and which would receive political and financial support. To that end, UNEP had provided its full support to the secretariat of the International Negotiating Committee. The Programme would also continue to compile, disseminate and promote the development of methodologies for the design and implementation of desertification control projects and to extend its support to the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO).

17. The Convention on Biological Diversity had been ratified by the required number of States and would enter into force in December 1993. A recent meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee on the Convention had focused on ways and

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means of implementing the provisions of that instrument at the national and international levels.

18. With regard to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNEP not only would provide scientific and technical advice but would act as the Facility's environmental trustee, safeguarding the interests of the relevant international conventions. The Programme would continue to cooperate closely with the Commission on Sustainable Development and its secretariat. The Commission had designated UNEP as Task Manager for toxic chemicals and hazardous wastes, environmental law, ozone and transboundary atmosphere pollution, desertification, biodiversity and Earthwatch.

19. As part of its restructuring efforts, UNEP had introduced a new management approach with a view to providing an integrated response to the needs of Member States in its programme planning for the 1994-1995 biennium. UNEP would also attempt to strengthen the operational capacity of its regional offices, as called for by Agenda 21 and the Governing Council, and enhance its cooperation with both the regional bureaux of UNDP and the regional commissions.

20. Unfortunately, contributions to the Environment Fund for 1992 and 1993 had been lower than expected, and UNEP's programme of activities had had to be scaled down. Clearly, the allocation of resources in the future must reflect the priority attached by Member States to the environment.

21. Turning to the work of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), she said that the principal message to emerge from the fourteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements, held at Nairobi from 26 April to 5 May 1993, was that effective human settlements development and management were fundamental to the attainment of the overall goal of sustainable development. The Commission had recognized the intersectoral nature of human settlements and their linkages to such critical development issues as employment-generation, poverty alleviation, the advancement of women and the goals of Agenda 21.

22. The Commission had also underscored the contribution that human settlements development could make to political and social stability at a time of transition in many parts of the world. As the home was both the physical and psychological foundation of stable family and community life, the international community must recognize that the work of Habitat was crucial to the advancement of the goals of peace, development and progress. Moreover, human settlements programmes formed the core of rehabilitation and development efforts in areas shattered by armed conflict.

23. Human settlements policies and programmes were a fundamental element of sustainable development. Given that the overwhelming majority of the world's population in the twenty-first century would be living in towns and cities, funding must be provided to ensure the quality of infrastructure, services and urban management, the key determinants of economic growth and the quality of life. Coordinated human settlements and environmental policies were therefore vital in all countries at all levels.

24. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had pointed out that the immediate priority of developing countries was upgrading the

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environment of their populations. The possibility of joint activities involving Habitat and UNEP had therefore been given much consideration at the Commission's fourteenth session and was reflected in the Commission's decisions and resolutions. One of the main topics of discussion had been the preparations for the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), to be held in Turkey in June 1996. The Commission's deliberations had confirmed that Governments were expecting the Conference to define inclusive, innovative and enabling settlements and urban policies for the twenty-first century which could generate economic growth, alleviate poverty and improve the urban environment. Those concerns were reflected in the two substantive themes recommended by the Commission for the Conference: sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world and adequate shelter for all. They were also reflected in the draft guidelines for preparations at the national, regional and global levels elaborated by the Commission at the request of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference.

25. Preparations for the Conference were well under way. A core secretariat and a work programme for the preparatory process had been submitted to the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. The regional commissions had also been involved in the preparatory process, and the World Bank and Habitat had entered into an agreement to develop a set of urban indicators which Governments could use to monitor and assess human settlements conditions and needs and to establish urban data and information systems. The Commission for Human Settlements attached great importance to national preparations in particular, which it hoped would be broad-based and involve community groups, local authorities, NGOs, women's organizations and the private sector.

26. The Commission had also considered the ongoing implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. It had urged Governments to adopt an effective system for monitoring the implementation of their national strategies, using the shelter sector performance indicators developed by the Commission in collaboration with the World Bank.

27. The Commission had also adopted resolutions on the human right to adequate housing and on disaster and post-war reconstruction and rehabilitation. The Centre had begun to work closely with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and had been invited to join the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Post-War and Disaster Reconstruction and Development. Increasingly, it was being called upon to make an early contribution to the continuum of rehabilitation, reconstruction and development efforts of the United Nations system. Habitat continued to play a leading role in Afghanistan, Liberia, Rwanda, El Salvador and, in cooperation with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, in southern Lebanon. It had recently been asked by the regional authorities in northern Somalia to work with UNDP on a reconstruction and economic revitalization programme in Hargeisa.

28. Under common executive leadership, Habitat and UNEP had explored opportunities for collaboration in a broad range of areas. The two were carrying out joint programming exercises in all regions where developing countries were located. UNEP and Habitat had made a joint contribution to the World Conference on Human Rights and would continue to do so at a number of other major United Nations development-oriented conferences. Cooperation

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between UNEP and Habitat would require the support of each Member State. It should be noted in that connection that funding for Habitat's development cooperation activities, after experiencing threefold growth over the preceding five years, might be dramatically reduced in the medium and long terms.

29. She concluded by paying a tribute to Mr. Michael Reitzel-Neilsen, a senior staff member of UNEP and Habitat who had been senselessly murdered.

30. Mr. LEVY (Director, Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing and its impact on the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas (A/48/451), said that progress had been achieved in regulating that type of fishing. In paragraph 18 of his report, the Secretary-General endorsed the conclusion of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) that there had been a significant decline in the use of large-scale pelagic drift-nets in the world except in the Mediterranean Sea. That was a matter of great concern, given the fragility of some of the fish stocks in that region. However, the distinct improvement in the overall situation and the fact that the majority of States had taken measures to limit drift-net fishing were to be welcomed.

31. The report of the Secretary-General dealing with the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (A/48/479) had been submitted in accordance with paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 47/192, which had expressed the mounting concern of the international community with the state of high seas fisheries. That concern had first been expressed at the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and negotiations on the matter had continued at the Conference. Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 had called for an intergovernmental conference under United Nations auspices, taking into account relevant activities at the subregional, regional and global levels, with a view to promoting effective implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. The Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks had held an organizational session and a substantive session at Headquarters. The discussion during the general debate at the substantive session had resulted in a basic text, contained in annex II of the Secretary-General's report, that would serve as a basis for subsequent negotiations. It should be noted that the voluntary fund established to facilitate participation in the Conference by representatives of least developed countries had not yet received any contributions, despite appeals, to that end, and hoped that that situation would soon be remedied.

32. Mr. KJELLÉN (Sweden), speaking as Chairman of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification on those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, introduced the Committee's report (A/48/226 and Add.1). At the Committee's first substantive session, held in Nairobi, some of the presentations, while noting the global dimension of the problem, had underlined the particular vulnerability of African countries and the need for international support to their Governments, which were struggling to cope with the problem with limited means. Governments had expressed their

(Mr. Kjellén, Sweden)

readiness to support the general structure of the convention, which was similar to that of the Framework Convention on Climate Change. The basic text had undergone a first reading during the second session, held at Geneva, and the Secretariat was currently preparing a consolidated document based on positions expressed at that session which would be discussed at the third session, in January 1994. The Secretariat had also launched a series of case-studies on selected regions and countries of Africa to be used in identifying measures and eliciting long-term commitments by donors and affected Governments.

33. In its decision 2/4, the International Negotiating Committee had proposed a draft resolution for submission to the General Assembly at its current session. The text included an appeal for the Committee to conclude its negotiations before the June 1994 deadline established by Agenda 21. While that time-frame was inadequate for solving all the problems involved in preparing the convention, efforts should be made to ensure that the instrument provided a strong legal basis for supporting and monitoring the implementation of specific agreements on the subject within a coherent institutional structure.

34. Although previous efforts to combat desertification had been unsuccessful, the international community must have confidence in the follow-up to the Rio Conference and concerted international efforts to achieve sustainable development. In the context of Agenda 21, desertification problems could be placed in the broad setting of land management, which was linked to the all-pervading problem of water and to energy policy, but also to an understanding of the socio-economic factors involved. The convention must therefore be a practical instrument.

35. The global dimension of the problems related to desertification and drought, particularly those relating to food security, was obvious. Africa, however, was particularly vulnerable, and the international community had a common responsibility to improve its development prospects. Technical issues must be addressed in the negotiations, but the political dimension must not be overlooked. Only if the convention led to lasting improvements in living conditions could it be considered a success.

36. Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the adoption of Agenda 21 had been a clear manifestation of political will to address the challenges of environment and development. However, the developing countries were prepared to achieve the objectives of environmental protection only if resolute and effective policies to solve the problems of poverty and external debt and remove other external impediments to their economic revitalization were implemented.

37. The success of the first session of the Commission on Sustainable Development was only a first step, and the prompt launching of the intersessional working groups was essential if their recommendations were to be ready for consideration at the Commission's second session. The review of financial requirements, a policy framework for their effective mobilization and action to remove barriers to technology transfers were crucial to the implementation of the Commission's multi-year programme of work.

(Mr. Jaramillo, Colombia)

38. Within the framework of the implementation of Agenda 21, the Group of 77 and China had participated actively in the restructuring of the Global Environment Facility. They also wished to see the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development widely promoted, thereby raising public awareness of the need for a balanced approach to environment and development issues. Finally, they wished to highlight the importance of full implementation of the relating to hazardous wastes originating in industrialized countries and sent to developing countries.

39. The Group of 77 and China were confident that an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, would be adopted before June 1994. They hoped that the draft resolution adopted by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee would be approved by the General Assembly in order to give political impetus to the negotiating process and the framework for its final phase.

40. The Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be held in Barbados in 1994, represented another initial step in the implementation of Agenda 21. Adequate promotion of the Conference by the Department of Public Information and contributions to the voluntary fund established to support the participation of small island States and least developed countries would contribute to its success.

41. The Group of 77 reaffirmed its full support for the objectives of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), scheduled for 1996, as a means of promoting action to alleviate the living conditions of the most vulnerable groups in developing countries. The Group wished to reiterate its concern that the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements had not yet been appointed. The Centre was responsible for the implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 and the preparation of Habitat II and should therefore be maintained as an independent and separate unit. The situation of human settlements in both urban and rural areas demanded increasing attention as an integral part of the eradication of poverty in developing countries.

42. Mr. VAN DE CRAEN (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, with regard to the follow-up of the first session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the European Union had taken note of the proposal to hold meetings of two working groups. The mandate of the working groups should not be too rigid, nor should the groups themselves be considered as subsidiary bodies of the Commission, since their work was by no means exclusive. Other meetings, including those held on an ad hoc basis, also had an important role to play in preparing for the sessions of the Commission. The agendas of the working groups should reflect their technical nature and should be adopted by consensus. The European Union was prepared to consider practical administrative and budgetary arrangements that would be in keeping with its concept of the role of the working groups.

43. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries

(Mr. van de Craen, Belgium)

Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, had been given a very clear mandate which it should respect. The European Union hoped that by June 1994, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee would complete its work on the convention, whose geographical sphere of application would be universal, with particular emphasis on Africa.

44. The first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States had made considerable progress in the preparation of the draft programme of action for the sustainable development of small island developing States, to be adopted by the Conference. The chapters of the draft programme of action dealing with the financial and institutional aspects should be drafted in a balanced manner, while the programme of action as a whole should place greater emphasis on such cross-sectoral issues as the development of national capacities and institutions and regional cooperation. The next session of the Preparatory Committee should be devoted exclusively to negotiations. If the Preparatory Committee should also prepare a draft of the Barbados Declaration, which the members of the Committee could consider at its next session.

45. The first session of the United Nations Conference on Straddling and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks had brought to light areas of possible compromise on specific protection measures that could be adopted. The Conference should reach a consensus on basic principles for the elaboration of such measures. The Conference should also consider specific fish stocks wherever they were found, both within and beyond the exclusive economic zones, since its success would depend largely on its responses to that question. Furthermore, the Conference should be given an opportunity to continue and complete its work before the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

46. With regard to the follow-up of all questions relating to environment and development, the European Union considered that all those related issues should be grouped under a single agenda item to be considered as a whole by the Second Committee. That would prevent the consideration of individual aspects of the follow-up out of context and would enable the Committee to make a better assessment of the progress that had been accomplished.

47. While the European Union was in favour of a fully operational United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, it could not support certain plans to strengthen the Centre's institutional capacities both at the Headquarters and national or regional levels, since there was no convincing need for such an exercise. The European Union supported the Secretary-General's decision to keep UNEP and UNCHS under the same executive head, but considered that their programmes and activities should continue to be managed separately.

48. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had constituted a landmark in the strengthening of multilateralism and that the consolidation of its results was the task of the Commission on Sustainable Development. To ensure the success of its work, the Commission must maintain the democratic, consensual atmosphere of that Conference in the implementation of Agenda 21 programmes.

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

49. The fulfilment of the financial commitments assumed at the Earth Summit and the procurement of adequate new funds were indispensable for the achievement of sustainable development objectives. In addition, attention must be paid to projects presented by developing countries and to their assistance requirements. A precise definition of objectives might provide the necessary stimulus for the financing of such projects.

50. Strict compliance with the multi-year work schedule adopted by consensus at the Commission's first session was a prerequisite for activities undertaken in the context of Agenda 21. Informal meetings on specific topics might be useful, while the Commission and its working groups afforded a framework for elaborating recommendations and taking decisions involving the participation of all the Member States.

51. The principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development must be disseminated among the agencies of the United Nations system and in both the public and private sectors of the Member States to ensure that the "Spirit of Rio" was kept alive.

52. The Rio Group fully supported the holding of the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The Conference would have to approve those States' plans and programme on sustainable development, marine resources, biodiversity and improved quality of life and take steps to enable them to deal effectively with environmental changes. The Group also recognized the importance, especially for Africa, but also for their own region, of the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification. If practical results were to be achieved in those areas, appropriate financing mechanisms must be negotiated and defined.

53. The definition of the terms of reference of the restructured Global Environment Facility was a sign of the progress made in that area, although much work remained to be done. The countries of the Rio Group wished to note their strong interest in the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks and reaffirmed their intention to participate actively in the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

54. Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said that the resumed session of the Preparatory Committee for the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States should continue exactly where it had left off in the negotiations; there was no need for a general debate or formal statements. The resumed session should resolve as many of the outstanding issues as possible before the Conference was held, and the Preparatory Committee should begin work on the Barbados Declaration so that Conference participants would have a clear idea of the issues that remained to be discussed. It would also be useful to hold informal meetings and consultations with all interested parties before the next session of the Preparatory Committee.

55. Two weeks earlier, his delegation had participated in the World Coast Conference, which had been held in the Netherlands, and it hoped that the

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

Preparatory Committee would be able to benefit from the results of that important meeting.

56. Mr. SUCHARIPA (Austria) said that the first substantive session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had laid solid foundations that should enable the Commission to discharge its broad mandate successfully. The Commission's decision to create ad hoc working groups on finance and technology questions would require budgetary support. Great care should be taken to ensure that the working groups made a valuable contribution to the deliberations and recommendations of the Commission.

57. From 14 to 16 April 1994, Austria would hold a symposium on the topic "Sustainable development and international law" at which experts from North and South, the academic world, Governments and non-governmental organizations would discuss the possible contributions of international law to the quest for sustainable development for all. His delegation would see to it that the conclusions and recommendations of the symposium were made available to Member States prior to the Commission's next session.

58. The eighth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change had laid a foundation for further constructive work. The outcome of the Global Environment Facility's replenishment and restructuring would play an essential role in that regard. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee's recommendations to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session concerned the acceptance of Germany's invitation to host the first session of the Conference of the Parties in Berlin from 28 March to 7 April 1995. Since the Convention on Climate Change was expected to enter into force in early 1994, it was essential to make as much progress as possible in such areas as the adequacy of commitments, the elaboration of criteria for joint implementation, the fine-tuning of issues relating to the financial mechanism and the role of subsidiary bodies.

59. The negotiations undertaken by the Preparatory Committee for the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States on chapters I to XIV of the draft programme of action for the sustainable development of small island developing States had been particularly productive. However, further work was needed on chapter XV, and work on the Barbados Declaration had yet to begin. His delegation therefore supported the proposal to convene a short resumed session of the Preparatory Committee early in 1994 at which the draft programme of action could be finalized.

60. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification had made substantial progress in the two sessions it had held so far. His delegation would do its part to ensure that a convention was adopted by June 1994 and fully supported the recommendation to hold a further session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee not later than 31 January 1995 to review the situation in the interim period pending the Convention's entry into force.

61. The international community was faced with the challenge of finding a paradigm for development in which economic growth, ecological sustainability and equity within and between countries were balanced. That challenge should be

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(Mr. Sucharipa, Austria)

brought into the mainstream of scientific research and political discourse, and the United Nations should become a forum in which ways and means of promoting the new development paradigm could be discussed. The Organization should also provide expert advice on crucial policy choices, including energy issues, that lay at the very heart of the development process.

62. Mr. KEATING (New Zealand) said that while a real effort had been made by the international community to advance the environment agenda over the past year, it was important to remain vigilant in areas where gains had already been achieved, such as large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing and its impact on marine resources. General Assembly resolution 46/215, which had been reaffirmed at the Rio Conference, was a landmark decision that called for a global moratorium on drift-net fishing. His delegation reaffirmed its strong support for that resolution and wished to see it fully implemented.

63. Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing had ceased on the high seas of the South Pacific, and support was growing for the Convention for the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Drift-nets in the South Pacific. His delegation welcomed Fiji's signature of the Convention and Chile's ratification of Protocol II, as well as the measures taken by a number of countries in the Asia-Pacific region, to comply with the moratorium.

64. He expressed concern about reports of unacceptable dragnet fishing in the Mediterranean and the North Atlantic and the flagging out of vessels to circumvent national regulations. His delegation called upon the States concerned to take urgent steps to implement the moratorium and comply with national and regional regulations fully.

65. It was essential that the General Assembly should reaffirm the importance of full compliance with resolution 46/215 at its current session. His delegation would welcome further annual reports by the Secretary-General on the implementation of the moratorium and urged States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide the Secretary-General with all relevant information, especially on any alleged violations.

66. In the difficult task of orchestrating environmental activities in the wake of the Rio Conference, it was clear that the United Nations must play a central role. Various organizations throughout the United Nations system had sought to take the implementation of Agenda 21 into account, and the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development had been a major step. The Commission's challenging dual role would involve striking a balance between focusing political attention on environment and development issues and the practical task of implementing Agenda 21. The Commission must not become bogged down in bureaucracy; to that end, the current guidelines for national reporting should be simplified at the Commission's 1994 session.

67. His delegation attached great importance to the achievement of meaningful results from the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification, but felt that a detailed review of their substantive aspects could wait until the final reports

(Mr. Keating, New Zealand)

thereon were considered at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Further meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States should be held to complete work on the proposed programme of action for those States.

68. New Zealand accorded priority to work on the biodiversity and climate change conventions and the restructuring of the Global Environment Facility, and had therefore ratified the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, the Copenhagen Amendment, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change, in addition to agreeing to contribute to the operational phase of GEF. He encouraged States that had not yet become parties to the conventions to do so promptly.

69. Despite the scarcity of resources and the need for economies, short-term considerations should not be allowed to delay the work on global environment and development issues or hamper the achievement of the necessary consensus.

70. Mr. KOKEEV (Russian Federation) said that the first session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had confirmed the usefulness of that new body. The Commission should not only become a political forum for strengthening North-South and East-West partnership but should also elaborate specific recommendations for countries and international organizations based on an analysis of the main trends and problems and experience acquired in the field of sustainable development, as well as on a dialogue with all partners, including non-governmental organizations.

71. The implementation of the recommendations and decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had been accompanied by an improvement in the structures for coordinating all elements of the United Nations system in that field. His delegation welcomed the first steps of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development and was convinced that the High-Level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development would also play a positive role.

72. In spite of its current difficulties, the Russian Federation was endeavouring to make its contribution to sustainable development at the international and national levels. It had established an interdepartmental commission to implement the decisions of the Conference and had begun preparations for its ratification of the Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biodiversity. An annual report on the state of the environment in the Russian Federation presented an objective picture of the current situation there and indicated that, in addition to its own resources, the Russian Federation would have to rely on the international community's support and understanding of its specific capabilities, needs and interests.

73. The countries members of the Commonwealth of Independent States had proposed that, at the current session of the General Assembly, an exchange of views should be held on ways and means of strengthening ecological monitoring from outer space as an important means of implementing the decisions of the Rio Conference. All delegations should take part in a dialogue and put forward constructive ideas on the development of an early warning system for environmental disasters. In the interest of ecological monitoring from outer

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(Mr. Kokeev, Russian Federation)

space, it was important to make maximum use of the Organization's existing experience, in particular the experience of UNEP and that gained in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space, as well as the potential of such mechanisms as the United Nations Centre for Urgent Environmental Assistance.

74. The creation of a system of ecological monitoring from outer space would substantially increase opportunities for solving a number of cardinal issues raised by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, such as the implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the future international convention to combat desertification, as well as the sustainable development of small island developing States, the preservation of living marine resource and cooperation with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements.

75. Ms. ULLOA (Ecuador), referring to the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, said that her delegation considered it essential, at future sessions of the Conference, to abide by the agreements reached during the negotiations of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and to adhere strictly to the mandate given to the Conference, limiting the discussions to the high seas. The recommendations formulated by the Conference must have a binding character, clearly establishing the rights and obligations of States and creating suitable mechanisms for resolving disputes. The existence of a universal code of conduct in that area would also strengthen the action of regional and subregional bodies.

76. The success of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 must be evaluated in terms of improvements made at the national level by Governments and provincial and local authorities, and of the measures adopted by the international community and financial institutions to support the efforts of developing countries to provide housing for the poor. Given the beneficial effects that healthy, safe housing would have on the human environment, it was essential to cooperate fully in the preparatory work for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.